

# Foot Care among Persons with Diabetes

Persons with diabetes can develop several different foot problems, some of which can lead to serious complications if not treated properly. Foot problems happen more often if there is nerve damage, or neuropathy, which results in loss of feeling in feet. Checking your feet daily can identify problems early and keep your feet healthy.

## Foot care among adults with diabetes in Virginia, 2001-2009

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Daily self exam	65.9%	70.5%	69.5%	71.0%	71.8%	73.3%	71.7%	70.7%	69.4%
Annual exam	62.5%	69.8%	72.2%	72.9%	72.7%	71.0%	72.1%	72.2%	73.4%

Data notes: Percents are weighted based on 2000 U.S. Census data, age-adjusted, and reported in three-year rolling averages. For example, the 2002 estimate is an average of data from 2001, 2002, and 2003. Two years of data were used when three were not available.

Calluses, skin changes and poor circulation can lead to foot ulcers, or even amputations. Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower extremity amputations, and foot ulcers are linked to an increased risk for lower extremity amputation. Routine foot exams among persons with diabetes increase the likelihood of early identification of foot ulcers and, ultimately, decrease the risk of lower extremity amputation.

In Virginia in 2007,\* 8.7% of adults with diabetes reported that they had ever had a foot ulcer.

American Diabetes Association: [Foot Complications](#); [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

## Annual Foot Exams among Persons with Diabetes

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower extremity amputations. Persons with diabetes should have a comprehensive foot exam annually that includes checking pulses and sensation, evaluating general foot structure, and checking skin and nails for abnormalities.

### American Diabetes Association foot care recommendations:

- Have a foot exam at least every year.
- Clean and examine feet daily.
- Never walk barefoot.
- See a doctor early about any problems.

In Virginia in 2009, 73.4% percent of adults with diabetes had received a foot exam within the past year.

Healthy People 2020 Objective: (D-9) Increase the proportion of adults with diabetes who have at least an annual foot exam to 74.8%.

\* "Have you ever had a foot sore that took longer than 4 weeks to heal?" was last asked in the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Sources: CDC Diabetes Indicators and Data Source Internet Tool, 2009; VA BRFSS, 2001-2009; National Diabetes Education Program: [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov); American Diabetes Association: [Foot Care](#); [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).

Updated by the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Family Health Services, Diabetes Prevention and Control Project on 7/2011. For more information, visit <http://www.vahealth.org/cdpc/diabetes/>.